



## 9. The Modernist movement and aviation

The advent of accessible air **travel** in the mid-20th century led to increased requirements for new airports, amenities and associated infrastructure. This session invites presentations on aviation architecture, through the lens of modernism.

How did the modernist movement influence air travel, and vice versa? How did architects embrace the utilitarian design and functional requirements of airport architecture (i.e. terminals and control towers)? How were designers reimagining uniforms and fashion for travelling? How did connecting countries and cultures contribute (or otherwise) to the globalisation of airport design? How did the effect of overseas travel influence Australian architectural styles?

Session Convenor: Canberra Modern (Rachel Jackson)

### 1. The Mother of All Airports

*Lianne Cox- Studio of Pacific Architecture, ICOMOS NZ*

The title of this paper refers to Tempelhof Airport, in Berlin, as described by Sir Norman Foster. This paper uses an architectural perspective to discuss:

- How Tempelhof was planned as a cutting-edge airport, and how these ideas influenced airport design.
- The modernist architecture of Tempelhof from the large-scale modernist planning moves, the architectural design of the buildings, through to the details of modernism within the building.
- The innovative structural solutions that were developed, and implemented to achieve the design.

The paper will include an outline history of the site and discuss: where the name of Templehof comes from; use as a commercial airfield; use during the WW2; inhabitation by the Americans up until the 1990s; current uses; and what the future might hold for Templehof.

## **2. Aluminum takes flight – Women artists and Modernism’s materiality – The contemporary sculptural practice of Donna Marcus**

*Virginia Rigney- Senior Curator – Visual Arts Canberra Museum and Gallery*

Donna Marcus is a contemporary Australian artist whose primary sculptural practice is based on the arrangement of purposefully collected domestic aluminum. The complex geometries of her large-scale works defy the humble origin of their individual components, and her practice seeks to connect the layers of historical associations with their continuing resonance in contemporary life. Aluminum – the wonder metal – was imperative to the success of aviation design and in war-time, ‘Aluminum Drives’ extolled particularly women on the home front, to bring out their pots and pans and contribute to build airplanes for the war effort. Marcus interrogates this cultural history of materiality, particularly the association with aviation and modernity, and her work allows us to see these connections with fresh eyes. In a new age of ‘re-use and recycle’ her works have a potent urgency.

This paper places Marcus’ work in context with earlier women artists of the modernist period and their interest in the representation of aviation and modernity. The presentation proposes to combine striking visual imagery of both historical source material and contemporary practice layered with archival sound recordings and readings from original texts.

## **3. Heritage under pressure: protecting modernist airport buildings**

*Anna Hyland- RMIT University/ Abode Restorations*

Airport buildings have evolved in response to function—the technical and social requirements of modern commercial aviation. These ever shifting technological, social, economic and legal contexts have made airport buildings particularly vulnerable to change.

This raises questions about the conservation of heritage buildings in an aviation context. What is protected? How are competing pressures balanced? How do we preserve the modernist fabric of early airport buildings? And how does the significance of aviation architecture change as its setting or use is altered?

This paper seeks to explore these issues through a case study of the early modernist architecture of Helsinki-Malmi Airport. Opened in 1936, the Helsinki-Malmi Airport is a rare example of a pre-World War II airport environment, with original runways, hangars and

terminal building. Despite being declared a cultural environment of national significance, the City of Helsinki is pushing ahead with plans to develop the site.

This paper will explore the history and architectural significance of the airport, the dispute surrounding its development and the strategies being used to protect the site.

#### **4. Take us to the moon: playground rockets**

*Sue Jackson-Stepowski- Moree Plains Shire Council*

*Murray Amos- Moree Plains Shire Council*

Take us to the moon: playground rockets not only embody post World War Two geo-political stand-offs, brought overseas telecommunications to Australia and changed educational philosophies, but exemplifies rapidly changing community sentiments and values. The demise of playground rockets still evokes a nostalgia. So what happened? A survey of a piece of childhood fantasy, and one man in particular Dick West, tell us more about a society's dreams about how it once was and where a few still seek to be.

The Space Race was a product of the Cold War, both of which were transformative on how the world viewed technology. These geo-political events extended into overseas telecommunications, rose education standards, and caused international ramifications in the arts and popular culture, including how children play. The most famous climbing frame was shaped as a 'rocket'. In NSW most disappeared in the late 1990s due to OH&S concerns but a few survive including 3 of the 32 'rockets' fabricated by Dick West of Blackheath. This paper summaries how intertwined is a history of play, 1960s social trends, followed by a heritage assessment of 'rockets' made by Dick West. Moree had the first overseas telecommunications tracking station and seeks to ensure its original West fabricated rocket is conserved for future generations.

#### **5. Qantas Airways, Qantas House 1957 and post-war Australian national identity**

*Geoff Ashley- Ashley Built Heritage — Heritage Consultant*

The construction in 1957 of Qantas House, Chifley Square, Sydney, reflects the absolute confluence of many themes of Australian post-war modernism and national identity; where multiple cultural, political, technological and design 'heritage of the air' elements came together that either reflect or directed a change point in Australian history.

This paper addresses and links three key strands: the nationalisation of Qantas and its role both literally and metaphorically in linking Australia to the modern post-war world; the modernist design of the building itself and its direct aeronautical references (aluminum blade curtain-wall mullions) that also reflect the exposure to modernism in the architectural training and travels of its designer Felix Tavenor, and finally, the post-war technological and

social connections to the USA reflected in the use by Qantas of Lockheed Constellation and Boeing 707 aircraft and the construction of the adjoining, Qantas owned, Wentworth Hotel designed in the Californian office of the iconic modernist firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill.

As a link to other conference themes, this paper asks that with its privatisation, what is the nature of our collective relationship with Qantas – is there an ongoing national cultural association or is that now collectively consigned to history?

## **6. Holyman Airways and Modernism - the family connection**

*Fiona Austin- Beaumaris Modern*

As an interior designer (Austin Design Associates) co-author of the recently published book, 'Beaumaris Modern', and President of Beaumaris Modern, I have an ongoing interest in my family links to Holyman Airways and family company, 'Modern Art Furniture'.

Ivan and Victor Holyman (my great Grandmothers' brothers) started Holyman Airways in 1932 after the First World War. In 1936 Holyman Airways formed a consortium with other transport companies and became Australian National Airways (A.N.A) with Ivan Holyman as Managing Director, during this time Ivan engaged Melbourne Architect, Garnet Alsop to design the passenger terminals around Australia.

My grandmothers' brothers, David and Cyril Barrett, (Ivan Holman's nephews) started a furniture design company called Modern Art Furniture in Launceston Tasmania in the 1930's. Ivan engaged Modern Art Furnishing, to furnish all the passenger terminals throughout Australia.

Modern Art Furniture also furnished Wrest Point Riviera Hotel, (later casino) during the period of ownership by Holyman Airways.

The family owned 'Moderne style homes in Launceston and Melbourne – the Melbourne home designed by architect Esmond Dorney.

Modern Art Furniture designed and manufactured sofas, chairs, carpets, side tables, dining tables, dressing tables, wardrobes and even a circular drinks cabinet, the furniture was very contemporary for its time - pared back and 'Moderne'.

## **7. The Royal We: Qantas in the service of nation and empire**

*Annie Clarke- University of Sydney*

*Sally Brockwell- University of Canberra*

Post WW2, when aircraft gradually replaced ships as the medium for international travel, royal tours to Australia increased tenfold. Only six of 50 plus visits by royal family members pre-date 1954. In 1965, Qantas (then Qantas Empire Airways) flew the Duke and Duchess of

Gloucester on their Australian tour. As the national airline, Qantas promoted Australian design, food and wine through its first-class cabin service. For this royal tour, the interior of a Boeing 707 was re-modelled with Australian designs, contemporary textiles and a food and beverage service that showcased local produce, presenting Australia as a modern nation of cosmopolitan tastes that had grown beyond its stereotypical portrayal as a convict/colonial backwater. In this presentation, we argue that on the one hand Qantas sought to promote a modern and cosmopolitan Australia, while on the other the growing accessibility of air travel enabled the maintenance of imperial and colonial connections.

## **8. Flights of fancy: Developing an Historic Thematic Framework as a catalyst for Identifying and conserving Twentieth-Century heritage places**

*Sheridan Burke- ICOMOS ISC20C*

Introducing the forthcoming publication of the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI), developed in collaboration with the ICOMOS ISC20C, this paper will review the brave new Historic Thematic Framework for the Twentieth Century, through the lens of heritage of the air.

The technological and political advances of the Twentieth Century that developed the sciences of aviation, and its political, commercial and public applications have also changed virtually every aspect our lives and environment. Aviation sites have been created, abandoned and adapted in rapid succession, and the recent refurbishment of the Eero Saarinen designed airport terminal in New York for TWA will form a case study.

This paper will demonstrate through the heritage of the air how the Historic Thematic Framework for the Twentieth Century can be a catalyst for identifying and conserving sites and places, a useful tool for the professionals, heritage agencies and communities to research, identify, conserve and interpret the heritage of the Twentieth Century holistically and responsibly.